



**NOVEMBER THEME**

**RE-FOCUS**

Know Where to Look

**BIBLE STORY**

**Matthew 20:1-15**

Sour Grapes | Parable of the Vineyard  
Workers

**Spark Story Bible | pg. 298-299**  
The Vineyard Workers

**BOTTOM LINE**

Adjust your attitude

**MEMORY VERSE**

“Give thanks in all circumstances;  
for this is God’s will for you in Christ  
Jesus.”

1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV

**LIFE APP**

**Gratitude** | Letting others know you  
see how they’ve helped you

**BASIC TRUTH**

I need to make the wise choice and  
with God’s help, I can!

**FOR LEADERS ONLY**

**GOD VIEW:** the connection between **GRATITUDE** and God’s character, as shown through God’s big story.

**This WEEK: Key Question: What do you do when you don’t feel grateful?** Kids will learn soon enough, that sometimes it’s hard to feel grateful. Through asking this question, we hope kids will come away with a plan to refocus on what really matters and discover how they can show gratitude.

In **Matthew 20:1-15**, we’ll dig into a parable Jesus told one day about some vineyard workers. In the story, a few of the workers started making comparisons to what others were getting paid and became ungrateful and started complaining. Then, at the end of the day, they had a bad attitude because they thought it wasn’t fair.

**Bottom Line: Adjust your attitude.** We can change our whole outlook on life if we take the time to refocus and think about all that we’ve been given. We pray that kids will see their own life differently and discover all the ways they can show gratitude.

**SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION**

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today’s story.

Before kids arrive, **PRAY** for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Pray especially for the kids who struggle with negative attitudes. Ask God to show them their chances to turn their attitudes around and find something to be grateful for. Pray that all kids would leave today knowing that they can always adjust their attitudes.

**•• JUST FOR FUN**

**Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding**

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Ask: Would you rather take care of a puppy for a month and not get paid or scrub 50 garbage cans for one-hundred dollars?
- Let students discuss their answers to the question.
- Encourage them to ask each other why they chose the answers they did.

**•• GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME**

**Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group**

**What You Need:** No supplies needed



**What You Do:**

- Start with everyone sitting in a circle.
- Explain that you'll choose someone to start an hour-by-hour countdown beginning with 6:00.  
—As soon as that person speaks, someone else (not the kid sitting next to the first person) must say "5-o'clock."  
—Continue the countdown until the group is back to 6:00.  
—If two kids speak at the same time or if there is more than a 2-second pause in the countdown, call out, "Stop the Clock!"  
—Then start over at 6:00.
- Challenge everyone to count down as quickly as possible without pauses or repeats.

**What You Say:** "It was super frustrating to lose all that time when 2 people talked at once or when there was too much of a pause! Think about other times when you put time into something and didn't get the result you wanted. **[Transition] Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, we'll hear/we heard a story about a group of people who felt the same way!**"

*[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Children's Ministry worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]*

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## GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

•• **TAKE A SNAPSHOT** [Live for God | Application Activity]

***Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding***

**What You Need:** Paper in different sizes

**What You Do:**

- Before you hand out the paper, explain to everyone that you're going to ask them to rip a piece of paper into a shape that represents or reminds them of something they once got that they didn't deserve.  
—Don't specify whether it was something good or bad—just let them go with whatever comes to mind.  
—Their paper shapes can represent a feeling they had when it happened, a tangible object that's related to their story, a person who was with them at the time, or really anything they come up with that relates to their story.
- Give each kid a different size piece of paper.  
—Make sure there's a wide range of sizes so that the differences are noticeable.  
—If they ask for a larger or smaller sheet of paper, encourage them to work with what they've been given.
- Wait a few minutes for them to finish and then let the group share the stories behind their paper shapes.
- As they take turns sharing, encourage the others to chime in if something similar has happened to them.  
—**Pro Tip:** As kids share, listen for particular situations in which many of them connect. Those stories, feelings, hurts, or joys may give insight into the heart of your group and be something you can refer to later as you go deeper with discussion.

**What You Say:** "We all get stuff we don't deserve or something happens to us that we don't deserve. Sometimes it's good things, like being given a gift we did nothing to earn or finding our favorite snack waiting for us when we come home from school. Other times, stuff happens that feels incredibly unfair, like when a friend turns on us or we face a huge failure that wasn't our fault. The truth is that we often think we deserve something different than we get, like being given a tiny piece of paper to work with while others get big sheets of paper. Even when life seems unfair, God challenges us to still be grateful. It's as if gratitude isn't about having everything we ever wanted or even having what our friends have. Crazy talk? Not really. Gratitude is a big deal to God, and it needs to show up even when we least expect it. That's what we'll be talking about this week."



●● **BIBLE STORY EXTENSION** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

*Made to Imagine | An activity that promotes empathy and facilitates Biblical application through role-play and reenactment*

**What You Need:** Bible, timer (*optional – bring from home*), “Story Tellers” activity cards, individually wrapped candy

**What You Do:**

- Instruct kids to look up Matthew 20:1-15 in their Bible. (*They can share and look on as needed, but encourage them to remember to bring a Bible every week.*)
- Invite them to quickly review the story by taking turns reading on their own, reading the verses out loud, or summarizing what is happening.
- Ask them to pay close attention to the details so that they’re ready to retell the story in a short amount of time.
- Place the “Story Teller” cards face down within reach of the whole group.
- Choose someone who’s comfortable in front of the others and let him or her pick one of the “Story Teller” cards from the stack and then do what’s written on it.
- Start the timer (*or just estimate the time*) and let the group begin guessing what part of the story is being acted out. Say “STOP” when time is up.
- Repeat until everyone has had a turn or as time allows.
- Discuss the story together.
  - What did you like about the people in the story? What did you not like?
  - If you could’ve been one of the vineyard workers in the story Jesus told, which one would you have liked to be? Why?
  - What could you be grateful for if you were one of the workers who worked all day? What if you had worked for only one hour?
  - If the vineyard owner represents God, what does this parable teach us about God’s generosity? What does it teach us about gratitude?
- **Pro Tip:** This is a tricky parable in the sense that on the surface it screams, “UNFAIR!” Your group will pick up on that right away. Help them move past the seemingly “unfair” element of the story. Teach them that at the core of the parable is the truth that God, like the vineyard owner, is a gracious giver and that we cannot earn and do not deserve anything God gives us. It’s crucial that kids begin to grasp the fact that God’s great gifts, simply because they are God’s, are given not because God owes us something but because God is a giver of good things. Lead your kids to lean into the fact that God often does things differently than we expect. God will always do everything in love, but God’s love sometimes includes situations that may seem unfair. True faith, even for kids, rests on trust that God is God and God knows what God is doing. And that’s why we can be grateful, always and for everything.

●● **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

*Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding*

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

**What You Do:**

- Ask the following questions:
  - Name three things you can be grateful for every day no matter what.
  - Explain what it means to “adjust your attitude” when you feel like complaining.
  - Finish these sentences:
    - “It’s easy for me to complain when \_\_\_\_\_.”
    - “I can adjust a wrong attitude by \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - We usually base our feelings of gratitude on how great things are going or how much we have. Why is that not the best reason for being grateful?
  - What’s your best definition of gratitude?
  - In the story Jesus told, when the owner of the vineyard paid a full day’s wage to those who worked only an hour, he was being extremely generous. In what ways is God generous to you?

●● **VERSES TO TAKE WITH YOU** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]



***Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application***

**What You Need:** “Ephesians 5:20” activity page, pens

**What You Do:**

- Hand out pens and the “Ephesians 5:20” activity page.
- Have the group read the verse together from the activity page, each person reading one word then letting the person to the left read the next and so forth.  
—If they think their word is an important one, instruct them to emphasize it by saying it in a loud voice.
- Invite kids to circle the one word they think is the single, most important word in the entire verse.  
—**Pro Tip:** Let them know that there is no right or wrong answer. It’s okay if everyone has a different word or if everyone has the same word.
- Tell everyone you’ll count to three and then you’d like them to say the word they circled all at the same time. You’ll most likely hear several different words.  
—Discuss: Why do you think the word you circled is the most important? What’s another word that could be used instead of the one you chose but still preserve the meaning of the verse?
- Invite kids to underline the words “always” and “everything.”  
—Discuss: Name some situations when it’d be really hard to give thanks. Does always mean ALWAYS and everything mean EVERYTHING, even sad and difficult stuff? Explain.
- Invite kids to draw an arrow from the two underlined words (always / everything) to the word “God.”  
—Discuss: Why should our gratitude be directed to God? How do we show God we’re grateful?

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**PRAY AND SEND** [Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

***Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application***

**What You Need:** Timer (*optional – bring from home*)

**What You Do:**

- Challenge the group to take turns seeing how many times they can say “thank you” in 10 seconds. Keep a tally to see who wins.
- Ask them why saying thank you or having a grateful attitude matters.  
—How would things be different if we never said thank you to God or to others?
- Remind them that a lack of gratitude is a signal that we’re focused on the wrong thing.  
—Like the vineyard guys who felt they deserved more than they got, it’s easy to complain that others have it better.  
—Maybe they do, but that’s not the point.  
—God wants to help us be grateful—all the time, for everything.
- Challenge them to see how many times they can thank God each day this week.
- Tell them that if they feel like griping or complaining, the best fix is to start thanking God for all that God is and all that God has done.
- Close by inviting everyone to get their gratitude on by praying sentence prayers that thank God for one or two things.
- Send kids off with the following prayer...

Dear God, we know that You want us to give thanks in all circumstances. That’s not easy. Sometimes we even forget to be thankful when things are going great. Please forgive us for complaining and comparing and forgetting to give you thanks. Help us to trust and even thank you when life is crazy or frustrating or we just don’t understand why stuff happens the way it does. Thank you for loving us and always being with us, and thank you for the undeserved gifts you give us—not because WE are good but because YOU are. This week, when something seems unfair, help us adjust our attitudes and be grateful that you are always in control. In your name we pray. Amen.

**What You Do:** Give each child a **GodTime** card. Sunday Leaders: Pass out **Parent Cue** cards as adults arrive to pick up.