



SONG OF THANKSGIVING

PSALM 107:1-43

GOAL

- ▶ To teach students that, no matter the situation they may find themselves in, God has the power to save them. The Lord helps people in need because He loves us, and His love never ends.
-

WORDS TO KNOW

- ▶ **Steadfast:** unchangeable, unmovable, firmly fixed in place.

Mercy: compassion or forgiveness despite a situation in which punishment is deserved.

MEMORY VERSES

- ▶ **Psalms 107:1:** Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

James 1:17: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

OVERVIEW

- ▶ **Read Psalm 107:1-43:** This psalm lays out a number of scenarios in which people find themselves in great need of God's help: sin, sickness, danger, and evil. In each scenario, the people described get to the lowest point and can no longer care for themselves or survive on their own. In this desperate moment, they call out to the Lord. In each instance, the Lord uses his mighty power to save them. In each described situation, the psalmist reminds the reader that God does this because of His unfathomable love for us, which is one of the reasons for which we should all be thankful for God.



SUGGESTIONS

Psalm 107 shows God's mercy and love as He saves those who love Him from sin and evil. Despite the reasons for the situations these people found themselves in need, God loves them all, and He alone is powerful enough to help them.

- **Sin:** The nomad has wandered from God's path, far from where God had planned. Choosing to rebel against God brought the person in the darkness pain and suffering. Those who carried their sin became sick and feeble. Despite their poor choices, God loves them. When they cried out to Him for help, He heard them, and answered their call with His mighty power and saved them from themselves.
- **Evil:** People who have enjoyed God's blessing, but have forgotten who provided their most beloved possessions sometimes inflict suffering on others. The wealthy leaders who did not care for the needy were left to wander the desert wilderness, while God cared for and blessed the needy.
- **Mercy:** From sinner to sailor and from rich to needy, God answered their cries for help. No matter what these people did to land them in the situation from which they needed to be saved, God loved them and came to their aid.



**PRE-LESSON
ACTIVITY**

Ages 5-7 Thankful Hearts | **Supplies:** heart cut outs, markers, pens, pencils, crayons, decorating supplies

Write the word “THANKFUL” on each heart. Give each student a heart, and let them decorate it however they want.

Ages 5-10 Thankful Pennants | **Supplies:** construction paper cut into triangles, single-hole punches, ribbon, markers, pens, pencils, crayons, decorating supplies

Give each student eight triangles, and instruct them to write the word “THANKFUL” on them so that one letter of the word is on each triangle. Next, they should punch a hole in the middle of one side of the triangle, and thread the ribbon through the holes, making a knot at the top of each. Let the students decorate the triangles however they want.

Students can hang up their pennants as a reminder to be thankful always.

Ages 8-10 Postcards of Thankfulness | **Supplies:** postcard-size pieces of cardstock, pens, pencils, markers, crayons, decorating supplies

Give each student a piece of cardstock, and have them write a note thanking someone for something on one side of the paper; students can write to a family member, friend, or God. Let them decorate the other side however they want.



MEMORY
VERSE
MEANING

▶ **Psalm 107:1:** Our God does no evil and loves us without conditions for all time, and that is something for which we should be thankful.

James 1:17: Through God's unfathomable love for us, He showers us in blessings on a constant basis. God is constant; neither His love for us nor His plans to do good for us will ever change.

POST-LESSON
ACTIVITY

▶ **Ages 5-7 Turkey Hunt | Supplies:** 12 turkey cut outs, markers, tape

On the back of the turkey cut outs, write one letter of the word "THANKS." On one side of the room, tape one set of the turkey cut outs in semi-hidden spots. Repeat for the other side of the room. Divide the class into two teams, and assign each team a side of the room. On "GO!" students should look for the turkeys on their side of the room. The first team to find all of the turkeys and spell out the word wins.

Ages 5-10 Gifts of Thanks | Supplies: paper, gift boxes, tape, scissors, gift wrap

On pieces of paper that will fit within the gift boxes, write things that are easy and difficult for which to be thankful. Give each student a gift, and have them open them. One at a time, ask the students what was in their box. Ask them how they can show their thankfulness for their gift or how they can show thankfulness despite receiving something bad. Ask the students what they would have liked to have received, and ask if they are jealous of the person who got it instead of them.

This exercise helps students to look for ways that we can always be thankful no matter what and identify feelings of jealousy.



Ages 8-10 **GIVE THANKS** | **Supplies:** construction paper, markers, pens, pencils, crayons, decorating supplies

Write out "GIVE THANKS" down the length of each piece of paper, leaving enough room for students to write next to each letter. Give each student one of the prepared pages, and instruct them to think of something they are thankful for that starts with each letter on the page. Once they have filled in their words, let them decorate their papers however want.

.....

TAKE
HOME

There are a number of reasons we should praise God and give thanks to Him, including that He loves us and shows us mercy as He uses His power to save us from sin and evil.

- **Sin:** Jesus' sacrifice on the cross brought us forgiveness for our sins, but that did not stop us from being tempted to sin. When we go against what we know to be right and stray from the path God has created for us, we are inviting trouble into our lives. For every sin we commit, there are consequences. While God may not remove the impact of these consequences, He will absolutely help us to break the chains of the sin at the root of the problem. We should give thanks for Jesus' sacrifice and for the help of the Holy Spirit leading us away from temptation and sin.
- **Evil:** The blessings God gives us are meant to be shared, either through excess resources or by sharing the greatness of God that we have experienced. When we don't share with the needy or if we take credit for the good in our lives, we squander the blessing. God gave us free will. We can choose good, or we can choose evil. Even if we choose good, it doesn't mean that everyone around us is going to choose to be good to us. God may not change the minds of such people and make them treat us the way we deserve, but He will help us through any trouble caused by another person's evil decisions.
- **Mercy:** Despite our best efforts, we sin. We deserve the punishment for our sins, but because of the ultimate act of mercy and love, God sent His son, Jesus, to take the punishment for us. Like the people described in this psalm, no matter what we do, God will always love us, and He will answer us when we call on Him for help.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: What should people who have received help from God do?

A1: People who have received help from God should give praise and thanks to the Lord.

Q1b: When should we give thanks to God?

Teacher Notes: We should always give thanks to God. Sometimes life doesn't seem all that great, and we may find it difficult to find something for which to be thankful, but there is always something. Every day is a new opportunity to see God working in our lives. Every day is an opportunity to witness God's power and experience His magnificent creation. If we look, we can find so many things to be thankful for, even in the darkest, most difficult times of our lives.

SLIDE 2



Q2a: How did God help the nomads lost in the desert?

A2: God led them straight to cities where they could find food, water, and a place to stay.

Q2b: How else could God have helped the nomad wandering in the desert?

Teacher Notes: Let students answer. He could have made food and water appear. He could have made an appearance through a dream warning the nomad not to go on the journey. He could have made another person appear out in the wilderness carrying extra food and water. The point is, God has the power to have helped the nomad in any of the ways we think of and many more that we could never even imagine.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 3



Q3a: How did God help the people who were sitting in darkness?

A3: God's light broke through the darkness, and He broke their chains.

Q3b: Could you find your way out of a completely dark, unfamiliar room without a flashlight?

Teacher Notes: Let students answer. It would be difficult to find our way out of such a situation. While feeling the walls for a door or a window, we may stumble over things in the room that we did not know were there, which may even cause us injuries. Sometimes, sin can lead us to places and situations in our lives that we don't know how to escape. If we cry out to God for help, He will always answer us and give us help and guidance.

SLIDE 4



Q4a: How did God help those who carried their sin into sorrow and suffering?

A4: God healed them.

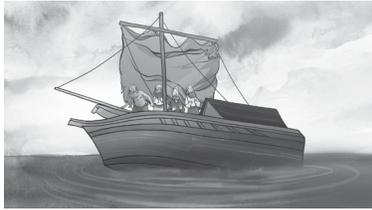
Q4b: Your friend has a cold. Do you sit close to him, hoping he will cough or sneeze on you?

Teacher Notes: Gross! No, we don't want to get sick. It is important to point out to students that sickness is not an indication of sin in a person's life. Some sins can cause illness as a consequence; however, it is not something God gives us as a punishment for sin. While it is unlikely that anyone would purposefully choose to get sick, we do choose to sin. Choosing to follow God can help us to stay healthy.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 5



Q5a: How did God help those battered by storms at sea?

A5: God quieted the storm and brought them safely to their destination.

Q5b: Does God cause hurricanes and tornadoes to occur?

Teacher Notes: No, God does not cause hurricanes and tornadoes. In the story of Noah, God caused a great flood to cover the entire earth. God wiped out everything living on the Earth that was not on the arc Noah built. After this great storm and flood, God promised to never use a storm or natural disaster to punish humanity. While God did create nature and the way in which weather works, we know that God does not send destructive storms to punish us.

SLIDE 6



Q6a: For what reason might God turn a fruitful land into a swamp?

A6: God might turn a fruitful land into a swamp because the people living there are wicked.

Q6b: What is the most beautiful place you have ever visited?

Teacher Notes: Let students answer. Then ask them if while they were there enjoying this place, they thought about that place as part of God's creation. Thinking of the Earth as God's creation brings a whole new level of appreciation to the experience. He created it so we could live on this planet and so we could travel to these places and enjoy ourselves. Every day, we encounter a world created to bless us.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 7



Q7a: Whom does God reject, and whom does God lift up?

A7: God rejects the proud and arrogant, and He lifts up the humble and needy.

Q7b: Why doesn't God prevent all evil things from happening to us?

Teacher Notes: When God created humans, He gave us free will. This means we have the ability to make our own choices, rather than just doing what God tells us to do every time. It's what makes us human and not like robots. Just as we have the ability to make good choices that bless us, our families, and God, we have the capacity to choose evil. Every sin has consequences; sometimes we feel them, other times the consequences are felt by others. Choosing to live as the Lord intended glorifies God, blesses us and those around us, and reduces the amount of evil in the world.



QUESTION & ANSWER

MEMORY VERSES

▷ **Psalm 107:1:** Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

James 1:17: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

.....

BIG IDEA

▷ God blesses us giving us good times and saves us when we're going through bad times.

.....

CLOSING PRAYER

▷ Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Your unchanging, unending love. Thank You for always hearing our cries for help when we are in trouble. Help us to see the blessings You have given us that surround us everyday. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



In Psalm 107, the writer says that everyone who has received help from God should give praise and thanks to the Lord. From the east to the west and from the north to the south, everyone who has been redeemed and saved from trouble should tell their stories of deliverance and victory.

SLIDE 2



Some who wandered in the desert wastelands became unable to find a city where they could live. Out of food and water, they were near death when they called out to the Lord, "Help us!" God led these nomads straight to a city where they could find food, water, and a place to stay. Let's give thanks for God's unfailing love that satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry!

SLIDE 3



Some once sat in darkness, cowering in the shadow of death. They were prisoners chained to their decision to rebel against God's Word. Weighed down from the pain and suffering brought on by their poor choices, they cried out, "Help us, Lord! Rescue us!" God's light broke through the darkness, and He broke their chains and led them into freedom. Let's give thanks to the merciful God who breaks every chain and sets us free!

SLIDE 4

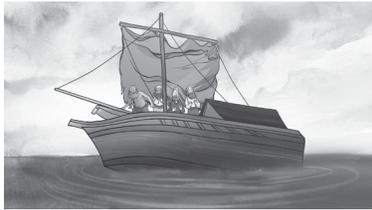


Some foolish individuals allowed their sin to carry them into sorrow and suffering. Despite growing sick and feeble, they refused to eat any food. At the very gates of death, they cried out to the Lord: "Help us!" God healed them and saved them from the situation they had inflicted upon themselves. Let's give thanks to the God who heals us because of his wonderful love and kindness!



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 5



Some set sail upon the sea for faraway lands. These people witnessed God's mighty power during their time at sea. Terrible storms battered their ships, sending them up and down massive waves and causing them to stumble and stagger. Unable to even stand up and fearing that they may sink, they cried out, "Rescue us, Lord!" God calmed the storm and brought them safely to their destination. Let's give thanks to the God of power who is great and wonderful to those He loves!

SLIDE 6



God's power is unmatched. If He chooses, He can dry up a river and turn the land into desert. He can take a fruitful land and turn it into a swamp because of the wickedness of those living there. He can turn a barren wilderness into a life-giving oasis, allowing cities to spring up, where God's people are blessed and prosper greatly!

SLIDE 7



In the cities God has blessed, some prosperous people turn from God and hurt people, even those who are less fortunate. God rejects the proud and arrogant, and lifts up the humble and needy. He raises up the lowly and gives them a safe place to live where their enemies cannot touch them. Let's give thanks to God, for His love and mercy that will never end or diminish!