



Giving Thanks for Special People

A Communication Activity for Thanksgiving

OVERVIEW

This communication activity invites the young people to complete a sentence-starter as a quick and nonthreatening way to thank special people in their life. It is an ideal activity for Thanksgiving time because the participants are already focused on giving thanks.

Suggested Time

About 10 minutes

Group Size

This strategy can be done with any size group.

Materials Needed

- ☀ 3-by-5-inch index cards, one for each person
- ☀ pens or pencils, one for each person
- ☀ envelopes, one for each person
- ☀ newsprint and markers

PROCEDURE

- ☀ stickers, rubber stamps, colored pencils, and anything else that can be used for decorating a card (optional)
- ☀ first-class stamps, one for each person (optional)

Preparation. Before the young people arrive, write the following sentence-starter on newsprint: "I give God thanks for you. You are a special gift in my life, and I want to thank you for _____."

1. Explain to the young people that they are going to prepare a special thank-you card to someone who has helped them or has shown them care within the last month or so. Ask them to think about parents, teachers, coaches, Scout leaders, neighbors, relatives, youth leaders, and friends who have supported them in some way, and to identify one they would like to thank. If your group opens up easily, go around it and ask each participant to name the person or to simply describe the situation.

2. Give each person one 3-by-5-inch index card, a pen or pencil, and an envelope. Display the newsprint statement you created before the session. Tell the young people to copy the sentence from the newsprint onto their card, adding the reason they have chosen to thank the person who has helped them. Explain that they will be sending that person the card when they are done. If you have time and materials, allow them to decorate the card.

3. Direct the participants to write the name and address of the card's recipient on the envelope. You may need to provide a phone book so that the young people can look up addresses. They may either deliver the card in person or mail it.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

- ☉ Though this activity is a natural for Thanksgiving, it can be done at any time of the year.
- ☉ Hold a Thanksgiving party and allow the young people to write and send as many thank-you cards as they want. Include time for them to decorate their cards with Thanksgiving motifs.
- ☉ Designate a monthly thank-you-card night, allowing 10 or 15 minutes for the young teens to write notes to anyone who has shown them care that month. Announce the activity before each gathering and tell the young people to bring the addresses of those they want to thank. You might also specify a category to focus on each month. For example, one month the young people could write notes to relatives, the next to teachers, the next to people their age whom they admire, the next to adults not related to them, and so forth.

SCRIPTURAL CONNECTIONS

NOTES



☉ Instruct the young people to make and send bookmarks in addition to thank-you cards. Cut index cards in half lengthwise and provide materials for the participants each to create a bookmark for the person they are writing to. They might start with a scriptural verse, such as Phil. 1:3, "I thank my God every time I remember you."

- ☉ Prov. 15:30 (Recognition delights others.)
- ☉ Sir. 6:14–16 (A faithful friend is a treasure.)
- ☉ Phil. 1:3–6 (I thank my God for you.)

Use the space below to jot notes and reminders for the next time you use this strategy.