

## Alley SG - November 11 & 12, 2017

**Bible Story:** Sour Grapes (Parable of the Vineyard Workers) • *Matthew 20:1-15*

**Key Question:** What do you do when you don't feel grateful?

**Bottom Line:** Adjust your attitude.

**Memory Verse:** "Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus." *1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV*

### **CONNECT TIME: Blurry Photos Game (Activity at Start of Service)**

*Supplies Needed: Dry-Erase Boards, Candy for Prizes*

"Now, I have a feeling that some of you were not so eager to drag yourselves out of bed this morning. In the spirit of getting all those neurons firing, let's play a brain game!"

*Leader divides group into 2-4 teams, and hands out one dry erase board to each team leader.*

"Here's how it'll go down: I have one dry erase board for each of you. When we start the game, I'll flash an unfocused, blurry picture up on the screen. Your job is to guess what the picture is supposed to be, but you'd better think fast, 'cause you'll have only fifteen seconds to write an answer on the board! After fifteen seconds, each team will hold up their board. I'll keep track of how many correct answers you receive. The team with the most correct answers at the end of five rounds is the winner! Any questions? *(Allow response)* Great! I'll give you one hint before we get the ball rolling: all images are somehow related to Thanksgiving. All right, let's get this show on the road."

*As the images come up on screen and teams guess each image, you can improv humorous dialogue with off-the-wall guesses. Help build suspense if the teams have similar scores. If necessary, make the last image worth more points to get a winner.*

"Let's see the first image."

**CG: Blurry Turkey Image**

"What do you think? It's a little out of focus, but take your best guess. You've got 15 seconds! GO!"

*Host allows 15 seconds to pass. Groups take turns holding up their signs.*

“Great job guessing, everybody. We had guesses all over the place! The blurry image is a turkey not a *[Name of most outlandish guess]*. Although it’s a little more rare than I’d prefer.”

**CG: Turkey Image**

*Host continues game in similar fashion with the following images.*

**CG: Blurry Cranberry Sauce**

**CG: Cranberry Sauce**

**CG: Blurry Cornucopia**

**CG: Cornucopia**

**CG: Blurry Giblet Gravy**

**CG: Giblet Gravy**

**CG: Blurry Great Aunt Ethel**

**CG: Great Aunt Ethel**

“Threw you for a loop with that last one, huh? Great Aunt Ethel is as much a part of Thanksgiving as touch football or giblet gravy!”

*Host gives credit on the last photo to any guess that implies older lady.*

**NOTE: Hand out an equal amount of candy to all teams, regardless of the score. Hopefully the students will notice that this is unfair, and some may call you on it. This is okay, and will lead into the lesson...**

“How’s about a big round of applause for our winning team and for the rest of the teams!?”

## Alley SG - November 11 & 12, 2017

**Bible Story:** Sour Grapes (Parable of the Vineyard Workers) • *Matthew 20:1-15*

**Key Question:** What do you do when you don't feel grateful?

**Bottom Line:** Adjust your attitude.

**Memory Verse:** "Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank him because you believe in Christ Jesus." *1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV*

### 1. Just For Fun

- **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.

### 2. Bible Story Extension

**What You Need:** Bibles, timer, "Story Tellers" Activity Page (one per group) Alley Cash (1 for each student who agrees to be the story teller)

#### **What You Do:**

- **Pass** out Bibles and instruct students to find Matthew 20:1-15. (They can share and look on.)
- **Invite** them to quickly review the story by taking turns reading on their own, reading the verses aloud, 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 and let the student 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 students 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 He gives us. It's crucial that students begin to grasp the fact that God's great gifts, simply because they are His, are given not because He owes us something but because He is a giver of good things. Lead your students to lean into the fact that*

*God often does things differently than we expect. He will always do everything in love, but His love sometimes includes situations that may seem unfair. True faith, even for kids, rests on trust that He's God and He knows what He's doing. And that's why we can be grateful, always and for everything.*

### 3. Discussion Questions

- Name three things you can be grateful for every day no matter what.
- 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?
- 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?

### 4. Make it Personal with Prayer

**What You Need:** Timer

- **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?
- **Challenge** them to see how many times they can thank God each day this week.
- **Close by inviting** everyone to get their gratitude on by praying sentence prayers that thank God for one or two things.

**PRAY:** *Dear God, we know that You want us to give thanks no matter what. 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.*

### 5. God Time Take Home Sheets

**What You Need:** "God Time" Sheets (one per child), pens (one per child)

**NOTE:** *The God Time sheets are intended to be a closing time activity each week in The Alley. Children will begin working on their sheets, as well as be encouraged to bring their sheets back the following week for **\$3 in Alley Cash**. Children cannot turn in their sheets the same week. The goal is to keep the lesson on their minds and in front of them throughout the following week.*