

THANKSGIVING ·IN THE· WOODS

LESSON PLAN



Key Verse

“Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!”

- 2 Corinthians 9:15

Supplies

- A recording of “Simple Gifts”*
- Crafting activity materials (see page 5 of this lesson plan)
- A song sheet with the music and lyrics to “Simple Gifts” for each student (See page 6 of this lesson plan)
- A coloring sheet for each student (see page 8 at the end of this lesson plan)

*Many versions of “Simple Gifts” are available online, including this one on Youtube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLAnuG1340g>



Welcome

Play a recording of “Simple Gifts” as background music while the class arrives. Have a Bible verse coloring sheet ready for each student to work on as the session begins. When the class has gathered, greet them.

Say

Today we’re going to read a story about a family that celebrates Thanksgiving out in the woods. That’s right, in the woods! They do it in order to enjoy nature and share some of the simple gifts that God has given them. I bet you have a lot of questions about this, right?

Well, let’s read the story. It’s called “Thanksgiving in the Woods.”

After you’ve finished reading

What’s one thing you noticed in this book? What’s one thing that surprised you?

If you were going to have Thanksgiving in the Woods, what would you bring?

At the end of the book, they sang together—does anyone remember any words from the song?



Simple Gifts

Say

The name of the song they sang at the end of the book is called “Simple Gifts” and it was written back in 1848. But people still sing it today. You may not realize it, but it was the song that was playing when you walked into the room! How about we listen to it again...

(Play the song once, then have the class sing along with the recording, using the sheet music at the back of the book or from page 6 of this lesson plan.)

After you’ve finished listening

Do you remember a really good gift you’ve been given in the past? Or maybe it’s a gift you’ve given to someone else. What are the best kinds of gifts?

Can you think of a time when you have done simple things with family and friends? How did it make you feel?



Faith Connection

Say

The song “Simple Gifts” reminds us of the importance of living simply. It says that love and goodwill are the result when we “come down where we ought to be.” That means being humble and sharing what we have with others. Let’s say the verse on your coloring sheet together.

After you’ve recited the verse, ask

- When we say God gives us gifts, it doesn’t mean presents like you get at Christmas. Sometimes it’s talents or skills or just a feeling of being loved. What are some gifts God has given you?
- One thing we know about God is that God loves all of us very much. What are some examples of God’s love?

Finish up by saying

The Bible tells us that God’s “indefinable gift” (remember, that’s from the song!) is the love and grace God has for everyone in the world. We experience God’s grace all the time. It’s when we look at the beautiful natural world, in the love of our family and friends, and when we help other people. And God gives us all this gift, no matter what. Sounds pretty good, right?



Craft

Making a Thanksgiving Tree

Materials

- One medium-sized tree branch held upright in a vase (or a base such as a pumpkin)
- Cut-out leaf shapes in fall colors (2 per child). See template on page 7 of this lesson plan.
- Hole punch
- Twine for tying leaves to tree branches

Instructions

Distribute two leaf shapes to each child. Have the children draw a simple picture of something they are thankful for on one side of the leaf. Help them write their names on the other side.

Punch a hole in the leaf and thread a piece of twine through it, tying the ends together. Have the children take turns hanging their leaves on the Thanksgiving Tree and telling the class what they are thankful for.

End the class by praying together

God, thank you for giving us your love and grace. Thank you for our families and for our time together today. Amen.

Simple Gifts

Joseph Brackett, 1848
a Shaker from Maine

'Tis the gift to be sim-ple, 'tis the gift to be free, 'tis the gift to come down

where you ought to be; and when you find your-self in the place just right, 'twill

Refrain
be in the val - ley of love and de-light. When true sim -

pli - ci - ty is gained, to bow and to bend, we shan't be a-shamed; to

turn, turn will be our de-light, 'til by turn - ing, turn - ing we come 'round right.

Leaf Template



“Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” – 2 Corinthians 9:15

