

## The “Thanksgiving” Vase

(\*\*\*This will be a fun object lesson. You will need a large glass vase, golf balls to fill it, pebbles to fill in between them, sand to fill in between all of it, and a pitcher of water. Let the fun begin!\*\*\*)

**-Today we are going to share an object lesson about “Thankfulness”.**

**-What do you usually put flowers in? (Vase) (*Pull out a vase.*)**

**-How many of you ever liked to play golf? (*Pull out the golf balls.*)**

**-How many of you ever liked to wade in little streams and brooks and collect the little pebbles along the shores? (*Pull out the bag of pebbles.*)**

**-How many of you ever liked to walk along the beach, digging your toes into the sand? (*Pull out the bag of sand.*)**

**-How many of you drink water? (*Pull out water.*)**

**-You may be wondering why I have all of these objects, but we are going to use them today to teach us how to count our blessings in our lives.**

**-First, let’s look at this vase. Is it empty? (...)**

**-Is it waiting to be filled with something? (...)**

**-This empty vase is going to represent our own lives when we are born.**

**-Like this vase, when we are born, our life is ready to be filled with things that make us who we are today. Some are good and some are not so good. But many of the good things make our lives worth living.**

**-We usually call these good things “blessings” in our lives. They may include things like joy, family, love, friendship, salvation, and so much more.**

**-(*Point to the sand, pebbles, golf balls, and water.*) Each of these objects are going to represent some of the “blessings” that fill our lives as we grow.**

**-Which of the objects up here, besides the vase, are the largest. (The golfballs)**

**-So, let’s start with the golf balls. Because they are the largest, let’s let them represent the important things or big blessings in our lives. Things, that if everything else was lost and only they remained, our lives would still be full. Can you name some of them? (Salvation, wife, husband, sisters, brothers, children, grandchildren, health, friends, favorite passions, etc.) (*Place balls in vase as they name them.*)**

**-Are you thankful for them? (...)**

**-Do you try to thank God for them everyday? (...)**

**-There is a verse that actually tells us how we need to do this. Let’s read it aloud together from our Verse Sheet to hear what it has to say. #1 on your sheet: (Psalm 95:2 “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.”)**

**-According to this verse, how should we come before the Lord’s presence? (With thanksgiving. Shouting joyfully with psalms.)**

**-What do you think “thanksgiving” means? (To thank Him for things.)**

**-So we thank Him for the things that these golf balls represent.**

**-Does anyone know what the second part of this verse “shouting joyfully with psalms” means?** (It came from the Hebrew word “mizmor” which means “A melody of praise” or songs of praise! It means to sing songs of praise.)

**-How can we come into His presence with “songs of praise”?** (We can sing hymns or songs that we know that praise Him or speak one of the psalms in the Bible that tells of His glory and praise. The book of psalms written by David has some beautiful ones!)

**-Why do you think it is so important to come before His presence with thanksgiving and praise?** (It helps us to remember that it is only by His power and sovereignty that we have what we have and are able to do what we do everyday. As crucial as oxygen, water and nutrition are to keep us alive, praise and thanksgiving keeps us alive spiritually by reminding us where our help comes from and keeps us in a right relationship with Him.)

**-King David reminded us of this when he wrote Psalm 121:1-2. Let’s read it together on our Verse Sheet, #2:** (Psalm 121:1-2 “I lift up my eyes to the mountains – *where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth!*”)

**-So where did King David say His help came from?** (The Lord, the Maker of Heaven and earth.”)

**-Do you believe in this as well and praise Him for it? (...)**

**-Now let’s look at the pebbles. (*Bring out the bag of pebbles.*)**

**-They represent the other “blessings” that God gives us, that even if we lost these particular blessings, we would still be okay because we could possibly get them back down that road.**

**Let’s name some of these temporal blessings: (*Place pebbles in vase as they are named.*)** (Job, home, car, clothes, money, books, jewelry, food, electricity, etc)

**-These are just the added perks that God gives us out of His loving-kindness towards us.**

**-There is a verse in the Bible that talks about this. Let’s read it together, it is #3 on our Verse Sheet:** (Matthew 7:11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your Father who is in heaven* give good things to those who ask Him!”)

**-Who does this say God is to us?** (Our Father in heaven)

**-What does this say about our Father in heaven?** (He knows how to give good gifts to us if we ask Him!)

**-Do you like receiving good gifts from the Lord? (...)**

**-Then we need to remember to thank Him for them everyday.**

**-Now let’s move forward to some other kinds of gifts or blessings that God gives us.**

**-These particular blessings we are going to talk about are not the kind that we can touch, and they cannot be bought and sold. These are the kinds that touch our hearts from deep within.**

**-Can anyone describe some of these heart-filled gifts that God gives us, hint: they come from the fruit of the Spirit living inside of us: (love, joy, peace, hope, kindness, etc.) (*Pour part of the sand in the vase to represent these gifts. Save some for later.*)**

**-Let’s read verse #4 on our Verse Sheet to add any that we may have missed:** (Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”)

**-Have any of you experienced love? (...) What was it like? (...)**

**-Now, let me ask, as a believer, have you ever loved someone who was unloveable or hard to love? (...)**

**-Where do you think that kind of “underserving” love comes from? (God’s Holy Spirit who lives in us) It is a gift from God.**

**-Have you ever experienced joy?(...) Can you share a time with us? (...)**

**-Have you ever experienced joy or peace when it seemed impossible to the world that you should have it, maybe through a serious illness, death of a loved one, etc. and yet you were still able to have peace and joy? (...)**

**-This is another gift from God.**

**-Have you ever felt patience at a time when others would find it impossible? (..)**

**-Have you ever experienced kindness and goodness that wells within your heart for someone else? (...)**

**-Are you still faithful to the Lord even though it may have been hard at times? (...)**

**-Have you experienced gentleness and self-control in times when it seemed impossible to have it? (...)**

**-These are all gifts that cannot be bought or sold, that come from the Lord!**

**-He empowers us with all of these through His Holy Spirit that lives in us and we need to be thankful for them daily.**

**-I’d like us to move on to another gift that He gives us that cannot be bought or sold as well. Someone may have already shared this but let’s read about it in Isaiah 40, #5 on our Verse Sheet. (Isaiah 40:29 “He gives power to the weak, And to *those who have* no might He increases strength.”)**

**-How many of you feel weak and powerless sometimes, whether physically or mentally? (...)**

**-According to this verse, what blessing does He give us in those moments? (Strength for the weary.) (*Pour more sand.*)**

**-He blesses us with the power to walk through a situation in His strength when we have none of our own.**

**-Think of a child that cannot carry a heavy load. You would probably take the load from him or her and if the child is weak as well, you would even pick the child up and carry him or her as well as the heavy load. That is what our Lord does for us when our load gets too heavy to bear, He lifts us and carries us along with the load!**

**-There is another blessing that He gives us that is greater than all of these. Let’s read about it in our next verse together, #6: (John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”)**

**-What blessing does He give us here that out measures them all? (His Son. Salvation! Eternal Life!) (*Pour the rest of the sand.*)**

**-The greatest gift of all! It just tops them all off!!!**

**-It covers everything. It is by His Son that we receive His blessings.**

**-When He sees us, He sees His child and is preparing a place for us to be with Him forever! What greater blessing can there be than that!**

**-Wow! We could just stop here with all these blessings, but there is something that goes right along with this particular one we just read about.**

**-When we are saved from our sins, He gives us one more blessing that is probably one of the most precious one besides His gift of His Son. This blessing comes and dwells within us when we accept His Son as our Savior from our sins.**

**-Here is a hint, we just talked about Him earlier and all the “fruit” He give us. Does anyone know what that blessing is or shall I say Whom that blessing is? (His Holy Spirit)**

**-Let’s read our last verse together to see how Jesus described Him in John 14, #7 on our Verse Sheet: (John 14:26 “But the *Helper*, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”)**

**-What is the first word He called the Holy Spirit? (The Helper)**

**-How does it make you feel that you are not left alone to handle your problems by yourself, that God gave us HIS Spirit to live in us, to HELP us in all things?**

**-So, according to Jesus from this verse, the next most precious blessing that God gave us besides His only Son Jesus, is the Holy Spirit, our Helper! We are never left alone here on this earth without a part of Him living inside of us, guiding us and helping us along life’s journey. (*Pour the water into the vase.*)**

**-This gift covers all the “earthly blessings” that are given to us and one that is most precious next to His Son. Like sand and water, Jesus and His Holy Spirit, they just go together! ☺**

**-You see, everyday is the day to thank God for all the physical and material blessings He gives us, but most important of all, to remember the blessings that He gives us that cannot be taken away.**

**-His overwhelming love for us, His grace for us, His mercy for us, His forgiveness for our sins through His Son Jesus, and His Holy Spirit that guides us each and everyday!**

**-As we look at this vase, full of all the blessings that the Lord gives us, let’s remember Him today and be thankful to Him all the days of our lives!**

## The Thanksgiving Vase Verse Sheet

1. Psalm 95:2 “Let us come before His presence with *thanksgiving*; Let us *shout joyfully to Him with psalms.*”
2. Psalm 121:1-2 “I lift up my eyes to the mountains – *where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth!*”
3. Matthew 7:11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*”
4. Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”
5. Isaiah 40:29 “He gives *power* to the weak, And to *those who have no might* He increases *strength.*”
6. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him, should not perish but have everlasting life.”
7. John 14:26 “But the *Helper*, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”