

## THANKSGIVING LESSON

### Teacher's Notes

Time: 90 mins

Level: Intermediate / Advanced

*Community Building – Life*

#### **Warm-up 5**

Small talk;

Any questions in English that students encountered this week in daily life;

Review homework from previous week.

*Life to Topic*

#### **Class Discussion 10**

- 1) Write "Thanksgiving" on the board. What date does it fall on this year? What do you know about the customs of Thanksgiving in Canada?
- 2) What do you think "Thanksgiving" celebrates?
- 3) Do you have a similar festival in your culture? Do you know of similar festivals in other cultures?

*Topic*

#### **Reading 35**

"A Thanksgiving Story" (See Student Handout)

Today we are going to read a Thanksgiving story. It happened in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and was the beginning of Thanksgiving in America. The Canadian story was brief and less interesting; it is also included in your Handout. (**Note:** If there is time or if there is a special request, the teacher can talk about the history and tradition of Canadian Thanksgiving as well. See Student Handout.)

*Pre-reading:* Write these vocabulary on the board and explain them:

The Pilgrims – in this story, they were a group of religious believers in England who wanted to escape religious persecution. (Also explain the regular meaning.)  
devastating; harvest; proclaim / proclamation; feast; bountiful; drought

*Reading:* 1) Ask students to read the story silently, underlining any remaining difficult words as they read. Encourage them to guess the meanings from the context. Ask them to do the True or False comprehension exercise that follows when they finish reading (see Student Handout).

(**Optional:** If there is access to an English dictionary, bring that in and encourage those who finish early to look up any words they don't know.)

- 2) Go over the comprehension exercise, asking for true statements if the answers are 'False'. Point out portions of the text.
- 3) Teacher reads the text once while the students listen.
- 4) Ask if there are still words or grammar that they cannot make sense of.

*Post-reading--Class Discussion:*

- 1) Which part of the story do you like most? Why?
- 2) Name the difficulties the Pilgrims encountered. If you were them, would you find it easy to give thanks to God?

*Topic to Life* (the Biblical portion in this lesson) **35**

Teacher: All of the early Thanksgiving celebrations had one thing in common. The thanksgiving was directed towards God. It did not matter that many had very hard times. The people knew that God was their Creator and Provider and that all good things ultimately came from Him.

**Class Discussion 5:**

**Choose one question:**

- 1) Do you agree that all cultures, from ancient times, knew what it was to give thanks to God? Was it “natural” for human beings to do this? Why?

**OR**

- 2) Do you, personally, give thanks to God? Have you said “thank you” to God / a god, and under what circumstances?

**Pair work 15:**

Divide into pairs. Ask the students to pick Partner A or Partner B, and cover their partner’s column. Take turn to read these Bible verses aloud to your partner. Then try to explain the verse to your partner in your own words: what do you think it means? When you are finished, talk together about which verse(s) you like best. (See Student Handout)

**Writing and grammar 15:**

1. Write down 5 things you are thankful for in your life right now. Start with “I am thankful for...” or “I thank God for...”
2. Think of 3 things in your life that you want to see changed or improved. Then write 3 sentences to thank God for these things even though they may seem negative. Use words like “*although*” or “*even though*”, if possible.

For example: “*Even though* my job is boring and monotonous, I thank God for it because it provides me with an income.”

3. Be prepared to share one of these with the class.

*Life*

**Homework 5**

- 1) Read one or more of the three texts: “Gifts from the Heart”; excerpts from “President George W. Bush's Thanksgiving Proclamation of 2001”; “The Ten Lepers” (see Student Handout). Write down your thoughts in a journal after reading it (them). Be prepared to share some of the thoughts with the class next week.
- 2) Think about how you can become a more thankful person this week. How would this affect your outlook on life?
- 3) Have a great Thanksgiving Day! Gather with family and friends and perhaps observe some Canadian customs!

## Thanksgiving Lesson Student Handout

### Class Discussion

- 1) What date does Thanksgiving fall on this year? What do you know about the customs of Thanksgiving in Canada?
- 2) What do you think “Thanksgiving” celebrates?
- 3) Do you have a similar festival in your culture? Do you know of similar festivals in other cultures?

### A Thanksgiving Story

On Sept. 6, 1620 the Pilgrims set sail from England for the New World on a ship called the Mayflower. The long trip was cold and damp and took 65 days. Since there was the danger of fire on the wooden ship, the food had to be eaten cold. Many passengers became sick and one person died by the time land was sighted. The Pilgrims set ground at Plymouth Rock on December 11, 1620.

The first winter was devastating to the Pilgrims. The cold, snow and sleet were exceptionally heavy, interfering with the workers as they tried to construct their settlement. March brought warmer weather and the health of the Pilgrims improved, but many had died during the long winter. Of the 110 Pilgrims and crew who left England, less than 50 survived the first winter.

On March 16, 1621, an Aboriginal warrior walked into the Plymouth settlement. The Pilgrims were frightened until the warrior called out "Welcome" (in English!). The Native Americans taught the Pilgrims how to tap the maple trees for sap. They taught them which plants were poisonous and which had medicinal powers. They taught them how to plant the native corn by heaping the earth into low mounds with several seeds and fish in each mound. The decaying fish fertilized the corn. They also taught them to plant other crops with the corn.

The harvest in October was very successful and the Pilgrims found themselves with enough food to put away for the winter. There was corn, fruits and vegetables, fish to be packed in salt, and meat to be cured over smoky fires.

The Pilgrim Governor William Bradford proclaimed a day of thanksgiving to be shared by all the colonists and the neighboring Native Americans. The feast lasted for three days. The following year the Pilgrims harvest was not as bountiful. In 1623, a period of drought led to a proclamation of prayer and fasting, and rain came during the prayers. Governor Bradford then proclaimed November 29 as a day for thanksgiving to God for His blessings. This date is believed to be the real true beginning of the present day Thanksgiving Day. (adapted from <http://www.holidays.net/thanksgiving/pilgrims.htm>)

Write T (true) or F (false) against each statement. Think of a correct statement if the answer is False.

1. The Pilgrims were sailing from America to England in 1620. \_\_\_\_\_
2. When they arrived, they met a harsh and long winter. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The whole crew survived that winter. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The Pilgrims settled in a part of America where there were no inhabitants. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The Pilgrims learnt to plant crops by themselves. \_\_\_\_\_
6. There was a big celebration in 1621 because the harvest was good. \_\_\_\_\_
7. In 1623 Governor Bradford proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving in November to give thanks to God. \_\_\_\_\_

New words:

Discussion questions:

- 1) Which part of the story do you like most? Why?
- 2) Name the difficulties the Pilgrims encountered. If you were them, would you find it easy to give thanks to God?

### **Canadian Thanksgiving (*Optional reading*)**

The first North American Thanksgiving was celebrated in 1578 when the English Navigator, Martin Frobisher, held a formal ceremony in Newfoundland. He did this to give thanks for surviving the long sea journey, and other settlers arrived in Newfoundland, and the tradition was continued by them.

In 1879, Parliament declared November 6th a national holiday of Thanksgiving. Over the years this date changed, and on January 31, 1957, Parliament declared the second Monday in October of each year to be "A Day of General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed".

Most families in Canada celebrate Thanksgiving with a special dinner for family and friends. The dinner usually includes a roasted turkey and pumpkin pie. Thanksgiving provides an opportunity to look at pioneer life, and it is an ideal time to celebrate the importance of Canadian farmers for all Canadians.

Many families use to have special meal, and go around the table expressing their thankfulness for during the past year. It is a special day for children to spend with their Canadian grandparents, and to appreciate the abundance in everyone's lives. Many friends and family members use to get together to convey their thankfulness for the past year.

(From [http://www.rumela.com/events/events\\_october\\_canadathanks.htm](http://www.rumela.com/events/events_october_canadathanks.htm))

**Class Discussion:**

**Choose one question:**

1. Do you agree that all cultures, from ancient times, knew what it was to give thanks to God? Was it “natural” for human beings to do this? Why?

**OR**

2. Do you, personally, give thanks to God? Have you said “thank you” to God / a god, and under what circumstances?

**Pair work:**

Pick either A or B. Then cover your partner’s column. Take turn to read these Bible verses aloud to your partner. Try to explain the verse to your partner in your own words: what do you think it means? When you are finished, talk together about which verse(s) you like best.

Partner A	Partner B
1) “Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens.” (James 1:17a)	1) “[Jesus said,] So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.” (Matthew 7:11)
2) “Then God said [to the first man and first woman], “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food.” (Genesis 1:29)	2) “[God says,] But giving thanks is a sacrifice that truly honours me. If you keep to my path, I will reveal to you the salvation of God.” (Psalm 50:23)
3) “Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)	3) “Give thanks to the Lord and proclaim his greatness. Let the whole world know what he has done.” (Psalm 105:1)
4) “Let them praise the Lord for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.” (Psalm 107:8-9)	4) “Let your roots grow down into [Christ Jesus], and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.” (Colossians 2:7)

### Writing and grammar:

1. Write down 5 things you are thankful for in your life right now. Start with “I am thankful for...” or “I thank God for...”

2. Think of 3 things in your life that you want to see changed or improved. Then write 3 sentences to thank God for these things even though they may seem negative. Use words like “*although*” or “*even though*”, if possible.

For example: “*Even though* my job is boring and monotonous, I thank God for it because it provides me with an income.”

3. Be prepared to share one of these with the class.

### Homework

1) Read one or more of the three texts: “Gifts from the Heart”; excerpts from “President George W. Bush’s Thanksgiving Proclamation of 2001”; “The Ten Lepers” (see next page). Write down your thoughts in a journal after reading it (them). Be prepared to share some of the thoughts with the class next week.

2) Think about how you can become a more thankful person this week. How would this affect your outlook on life?

3) Have a great Thanksgiving Day! Gather with family and friends and perhaps observe some Canadian customs!

## Homework Readings

### I. Gifts From the Heart

By Michael Josephson

A young man while roaming the desert came across a spring of delicious crystal-clear water. The water was so sweet he filled his leather canteen so he could bring some back to a tribal elder who had been his teacher. After a four-day journey he presented the water to the old man who took a deep drink, smiled warmly and thanked his student lavishly for the sweet water. The young man returned to his village with a happy heart.

Later, the teacher let another student taste the water. He spat it out, saying it was awful. It apparently had become stale because of the old leather container. The student challenged his teacher: "Master, the water was foul. Why did you pretend to like it?"

The teacher replied, "You only tasted the water. I tasted the gift. The water was simply the container for an act of loving-kindness and nothing could be sweeter. Heartfelt gifts deserve the return gift of gratitude."

(From <http://www.rampageofgratitude.com/gratitude-stories.html>)

### II. Excerpts from President George W. Bush's Thanksgiving Proclamation of 2001, delivered on November 16, 2001

During these extraordinary times, we find particular assurance from our Thanksgiving tradition, which reminds us that we, as a people and individually, always have reason to hope and trust in God, despite great adversity. ... As we recover from the terrible tragedies of September 11, Americans of every belief and heritage give thanks to God for the many blessings we enjoy as a free, faithful, and fair-minded land. ... In thankfulness and humility, we acknowledge, especially now, our dependence on One greater than ourselves. (From <http://holydays.tripod.com/bush.htm>)

### III. The Ten Lepers<sup>1</sup> (Luke 17: 11-19, EasyEnglish Bible)

As Jesus travelled to Jerusalem, he went along the border between Samaria and Galilee. Jesus was about to go into a village when 10 men with leprosy met him. They stood a distance away from him. They called, 'Jesus, Master, please pity us!' Jesus saw them and said, 'Go to the priests and let them examine you'. As they went, their leprosy left them. Then one of them saw that he had no leprosy. He came back. He was praising God in a loud voice. He fell down on the ground next to Jesus' feet and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan. Jesus said, 'There were 10 men whom I healed.<sup>2</sup> Where are the other 9? Why is this foreigner the only one who came back to give thanks to God?' And Jesus said to him, 'Get up and go. Your faith has made you well'. (From <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/luke-lbw.htm>)

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<sup>1</sup> People with leprosy. Leprosy is a serious skin disease.

<sup>2</sup> Cured, made completely well.