

How do you choose thanks?

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Colossians 4:2 (NIRV):

“Give a lot of time and effort to prayer. Always be watchful and thankful.”

Spring 2020 CT: 'I Choose Thanks' Senior Version

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Main Points Each Week:

Lesson 1: March 9-14

A Thankful Mindset Sees What Others Miss

Lesson 2: March 16-21

I Will Find Happiness By First Choosing Thankfulness

Lesson 3: March 23-28

Thankful People See Beauty in the Ugly

Lesson 4: March 30 - April 4

Be Prayerful, Watchful, and Thankful

Lesson 5: April 6-11

A Thankful Heart Believes God Is in Control

Lesson 6: April 13-18

Thankfulness Requires Attentiveness and Observation

Lesson 7: April 20-25

Thankful People Are Happy People

Lesson 8: April 27 - May 2

I Trust in God's Goodness

Lesson 9: May 4-9

Finding Thankfulness May Take A Lot of Effort!

Lesson 10: May 11-16

I Say "Thank You" - and Mean It!

Lesson 11: May 18-23

Thankfulness Is a Powerful Weapon Against Sin

Lesson 12: May 26-29

Prayer and Thankfulness Lead to Victories

- *No classes May 25 (Memorial Day); May 30 (Starwatch); June 1 (Summer staff training)*

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Week 1: March 9-14

Lesson 1: A Thankful Mindset Sees What Others Miss

1. Intro

- a. We are studying Thankfulness this season!
- b. We have a new Character Declaration! Memorizing our declaration can help you become a man or woman of *true character* by training your heart with true thoughts to think.
 - i. *Proverbs 4:23 "Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life." (HCSB)*
- c. God created each of you with a mission! I want to help you build the character you need to succeed in that life mission.
- d. Teach the new declaration.
- e. The Bible is God's words, his message to us. We're going to memorize this message from God this season: (*Teach the new bible verse and sign language.*)

2. Listen to Chapter 1 of Story - "Evacuate!"

3. Story Questions

- a. Why is the Matson family forced to leave their house immediately?
 - i. *A firestorm has broken out and is racing toward their property.*
- b. What happens when Wayne says he'll get the horse trailer ready?
 - i. *His dad says there's no time - just let them go.*
 - ii. *He argues, but his dad opens the gate himself and lets them out.*
- c. Where does the family go?
 - i. *Florence Elementary School, the temporary shelter for evacuees.*
- d. How does Wayne respond to his dad's prayer, thanking God for their safety?
 - i. *He's shocked that his dad could thank God when they have just lost everything.*
 - ii. *He doesn't believe God is at all good and storms from the room.*
- e. If your family's house and all you owned was just destroyed by a fire or tornado, do you think you would be like Jack and thank God or like Wayne and be angry?

4. Lesson Wrap Up

- a. Jack Matson focused on what he did NOT lose - his family - and was very thankful. Wayne focused on what he DID lose - his horses - and became angry. You will always have a choice as to how you respond to unpleasant things that happen to you. One leads to joy and contentment, the other to sorrow and anger. Choose wisely!

Planning:

What is this week's main point in your own words? _____

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Week 2: March 16-21

Lesson 2: I Will Find Happiness By First Choosing Thankfulness

1. Review Story (Chapter 1)

- a. Wayne Matson and his family have just barely escaped an explosive firestorm. Jack, Wayne's dad, released Scar and Beauty, Wayne's dearly loved horses, in hopes they could escape. They throw bags in the pickup and the family of four race down Grizzly Run to Florence Elementary School, the temporary shelter. After Jack offers a genuine heartfelt prayer of thanks for their safety, Wayne erupts in anger. The family has just lost everything - including his horses - and he refuses to thank God in the midst of such a tragic loss. He storms out of the room.

2. What is Thankfulness?

- a. Thankfulness = being aware of the good I have been given.
 - i. I use my senses: eyes, ears, touch, smell, taste to notice good.
 - ii. I use my brain to think about, understand, and focus on the good in my life.
- b. Thankfulness is something I choose. I can always choose to be thankful, or unthankful.
 - i. What are you choosing right now?

3. What does our declaration mean?

- a. Our declaration is something we want to practice believing and choosing.
 - i. Why should you be thankful? *Thankful people are happy!*
 - b. Our declaration reminds us how to practice choosing thankfulness
 - c. **Pause** = we need to slow down, stop our hurrying, and use our senses to observe.
 - d. **Remember** = think carefully. Step back from this moment. Search your life for the good God has put in it.
 - e. **Enjoy** = God has given many good things in your life. Have you taken time to enjoy them? Or are you thinking about what you don't have?
 - f. **Gifts God has given** = many good things you have in your life you have *not earned*. They are gifts from other people and God. Remembering something is a free gift should make us thankful. (*Even many things we earn or 'deserve' also contain gifts with or in them*)
 - g. **Today** = worrying about tomorrow, or reliving the past is often not helpful. We should instead think about what is true about our lives today that we value.
4. Thankfulness is sometimes very hard! But it is a choice. We can choose to make our thankfulness greater than the bad things in our life.

5. Application

- a. Can you use your eyes or ears to notice something right now that you enjoy? Can you choose to be thankful?

6. Wrap Up

- a. Thankfulness is not always easy, but it is a choice! And thankfulness will lead us to be happy.

Planning:

What is this week's main point in your own words? _____

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"Give a lot of time and effort to prayer. Always be watchful and thankful."

Week 3: March 23-28

Lesson 3: Thankful People See Beauty in the Ugly

1. Review Story (Chapter 1)

- a. Wayne Matson and his family have just barely escaped an explosive firestorm. Jack, Wayne's dad, released Scar and Beauty, Wayne's dearly loved horses, in hopes they could escape. They throw bags in the pickup and the family of four race down Grizzly Run to Florence Elementary School, the temporary shelter. After Jack offers a genuine heartfelt prayer of thanks for their safety, Wayne erupts in anger. The family has just lost everything - including his horses - and he refuses to thank God in the midst of such a tragic loss. He storms out of the room.

2. Listen to Chapter 2 of Story - "Scar and Beauty"

3. Story Questions

- a. What did Wayne and his dad see when they peered over the edge?
 - i. *A pack of wolves chasing two horses.*
 - ii. *One wolf leaped on the back of a horse and wounded it.*
- b. What did the Bitterroot Humane Society tell Jack when they called him?
 - i. They found the horses and took them to a vet and thanked him.
- c. What did little Wayne insist on doing while the horses were in foster care?
 - i. He wanted to visit them every week while they healed.
- d. What problem did Wayne have when he became the new owner and how did he solve it?
 - i. *He couldn't tell them apart!*
 - ii. *He discovered a scar on the rump of one horse and that became his name: Scar.*
- e. Why did Jack suggest the other horse be named Beauty?
 - i. *Because God had turned something ugly - the wounded horse - into something beautiful by allowing Wayne to keep the horses.*
 - ii. *"Even a scar can be beautiful to those who understand."*

4. Application:

- a. Have you ever had something bad happen to you that turned out to be something good?
 - i. **(Coaches - if you have a brief story, share it!)** _____
 - ii. *Walking through the woods and getting poison ivy - that's bad! But then learning what the plant looks like so you will be watchful and never get it again - that's good!*
 - iii. *Having to move to another town and leave your house and friends - but then making new friends and getting your own room!*
- b. Next time things look bad, don't complain. Instead, thank God for what He has planned for your good.

5. Lesson Wrap Up:

- a. We cannot see what is going to happen in the future, so when things happen we don't like, we can become angry, sad, or scared. But God sees everything that is going to happen! When we thank Him, even when things look bad, we are telling Him we trust Him to make something good happen.

Planning:

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"Give a lot of time and effort to prayer. Always be watchful and thankful."

Week 4: March 30 - April 4

Lesson 4: *Be Prayerful, Watchful, and Thankful*

1. Review Story (Chapter 2)

- a. While in the parking lot of the school, Wayne thinks back to when he was 5 years old. He and his dad were loading wood into the truck on a trail near a rocky drop off. They heard barking below and witnessed two horses being chased by a wolf pack. One was attacked, leaving a painful wound. Jack notified the animal shelter who found the horses and placed them in foster care. Wayne came to visit often. When they were healed, he was given ownership. They were identical except for the scar left by the wolf. Wayne named that horse Scar.

2. Why do we memorize words from the Bible?

- a. Because God created us, loves us, and wants us to be truly happy. The Bible is God's message to us to help us live meaningful and satisfying lives.

3. Our Bible verse tells us, "Give a lot of time and effort to prayer."

- a. Prayer is talking to, and listening to, God.
- b. God wants us to care about talking with him. He wants our energy, effort, care. He wants our heart to be focused on him when we pray.
- c. Prayer takes time! God wants us to make time each day to connect with him in talking and listening.
 - i. Talking to God is simple. You can just tell him what you are thinking about, what you are thankful for, and what you are worried about or need.
 1. Jesus said we should think about God as the powerful King of everything, but also as a perfect Dad.
 - ii. Listening to God is sometimes harder for us. We have to practice being quiet and listening with our hearts.
 - iii. Another important way to listen to God is to read and remember his words from the Bible. God uses the Bible to talk to us.
 1. The Bible tells us that "the word of God is alive and powerful." (Hebrews 4:12)

4. Our verse also says, "Always be watchful and thankful."

- a. God wants us to be on the lookout for the good he has given us in our lives and in the world around us. God tells us to choose to always be thankful.

5. Application

- a. When is a time today you could take a few minutes to talk to God?
- b. Ask God to help you see what good things he has given you so you can be thankful. Choose to thank him for the good things you notice.
- c. Who would like to thank God now? It's simple: "God, thank you for _____ (one thing)"

6. Wrap Up

- a. God wants you to trust him today. He wants you to believe he has given you good gifts, and carefully watch out for them.

Planning:

How can I help my students practice thankfulness today? _____

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Week 5: April 6-11

Lesson 5: A Thankful Heart Believes God Is in Control

1. Review Story (Chapter 2)

- a. While in the parking lot of the school, Wayne thinks back to when he was 5 years old. He and his dad were loading wood into the truck on a trail near a rocky drop off. They heard barking below and witnessed two horses being chased by a wolf pack. One was attacked, leaving a painful wound. Jack notified the animal shelter who found the horses and placed them in foster care. Wayne came to visit often. When they were healed, he was given ownership. They were identical except for the scar left by the wolf. Wayne named that horse Scar.

2. Listen to Chapter 3 of Story - "Just Give Me My Horses Back"

3. Story Questions

- a. What happened to Pastor Shane when the fire broke out?
 - i. *His entire ranch was hit by the firestorm; He released his 12 head of cattle and three mules; He had no time to gather his pack of supplies and barely escaped an explosion.*
- b. Pastor Shane didn't feel like thanking God. He didn't even have anything to tell the people that morning. So what did he do?
 - i. *He opened his bible & read this verse: "giving thanks is a sacrifice that truly honors Me."*
- c. Is Shane sure he has faith and trust in God? (no) How can he find out?
 - i. *By being tested! And this fire is a BIG test since he has lost all he owns!*
- d. What does Pastor Shane pray?
 - i. *He asks God to make them all watchful, thankful, and to lead them into victories.*
- e. What is Wayne's reaction to the pastor's sermon?
 - i. *"Just give me my horses back." He still sees no good in any of this.*

4. Application:

- a. Can you think of any good things that have happened so far in this story that Wayne could be thankful for?
 - i. *No family member was harmed by the fire; dad was home to get his family out in time; a safe place to stay; friends and neighbors; volunteers from Morning Star Church who are feeding them; iPads, bedding and other things to make them comfortable.*
- b. What is something you're having trouble with right now?
 - i. *a skill? bad grade? a mad friend?*
- c. In whatever trouble you are having right now, what can you thank God for?
 - i. *A coach who helps me with a skill; parents and teachers who help me improve my grade; remember the fun times with this friend and ask God for wisdom to fix things.*

5. Lesson Wrap Up:

- a. Sometimes God allows trouble in our lives, even though he is in control of the whole world. We don't usually get to know why bad things happen. What we can know is that God wants us to believe that he will take care of us even when we have trouble or pain. Hard times are like tests that show us if we trust God or not. By watching for things to be thankful for when we go through a hard time, we pass the test!

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Week 6: April 12-18

Lesson 6: Thankfulness Requires Attentiveness and Observation

1. Review Story (Chapter 3)

- a. Shane is pastor at Morning Star church. He, too, lost his property in the fire and doesn't *feel* like thanking God. But he *chooses* to do so anyway, testing his own faith. He encourages everyone to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and to believe God will bring victories from this tragedy. Wayne only wants his horses back. Later at lunch, Curtis, a little-known church member also living at the school, invites Wayne to help care for evacuees' horses at a ranch. He and Curtis become fast friends as they visit the ranch daily. Though Wayne loves the distraction, he sinks into dark silence each night during family prayer.

2. How to Practice Thankfulness

- a. A life full of thankfulness (and happiness because of your thanksgiving) will take practice! Practice being attentive to the right things.
- b. What does it mean to be attentive?
 - i. *Being attentive means to carefully look for something.*
- c. What must you do in order to be attentive?
 - i. *Focus on what's around you; Slow down & take your time looking.*
 - ii. *Search until you find what you're looking for—*

3. Stop for Thankfulness

- a. Use the "Stop 4 Thankfulness" sign and explain. Here is an image for you to use to remember to be thankful. Think of crossing the street. You should stop, look both ways, then go.
 - i. **Stop** - Slow down and prepare to find something you enjoy/value right now.
 - ii. **Pray** "God, please show me the gifts that are around me right now."
 - iii. **Look** - Use your eyes, ears, touch, smell, taste & brain to notice good gifts.
 - iv. **Go** - Say "Thank you" to God & people around you, & go on your way thankful!

4. Application

- a. Several times during class today, I (your coach) am going to say "STOP"
 - i. After I say STOP, I will call on someone to share what they are thankful for!
 - ii. *(Do this enough times during class that everyone gets a chance to share!)*

5. Lesson Wrap Up

- a. Being thankful takes careful practice, but you can make it a habit! You can build a *habit of thankfulness* with Stop, Pray, Look, Go.

Planning:

What is this week's main point in your own words? _____

How can I help my students practice thankfulness today? _____

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Week 7: April 19-25

Lesson 7: Thankful People Are Happy People

1. Review Story (Chapter 3)

- a. Shane is pastor at Morning Star church. He, too, lost his property in the fire and doesn't *feel* like thanking God. But he *chooses* to do so anyway, testing his own faith. He encourages everyone to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and to believe God will bring victories from this tragedy. Wayne mumbles, "Just give me my horses back," at the end of the service. Curtis Newman hears him and later speaks with Wayne's parents, hoping to be of help.

2. Listen to Chapter 4 of Story - "A World Full of Night"

3. Story Questions

- a. Why did Curtis want to help Wayne?
 - i. *He heard him mumble about his horses and could tell he was angry.*
 - ii. *He wanted to help him see God's goodness in this tragedy.*
- b. Where do they go everyday now?
 - i. *To Wilson's ranch to take care of horses who belong to the people staying at the school.*
- c. What changes happened as Curtis and Wayne spent time together everyday?
 - i. *They became good friends; Curtis taught Wayne a lot about horses; Wayne was in a better mood.*
- d. How did Curtis and Wayne react differently when they saw the boulder blockade?
 - i. *Curtis was thankful they didn't crash into it.*
 - ii. *Wayne just saw it as a nasty roadblock they couldn't drive around.*
- e. What was the scenery like once they turned the corner?
 - i. *Beautiful green forest that had not been touched by the fire.*
- f. Why did Wayne miss so much of the beauty as they walked toward Curtis's house?
 - i. *His anger at God drove him into a dark mindset so he could not think about anything else.*

4. Application:

- a. Curtis is a great example of the power a *thankful* attitude has. He lives in a happy world, seeing good - even in a roadblock! Wayne is a good example of the darkness an *ungrateful* attitude brings. He's living in darkness and anger all the time and missing all the beauty around him.
- b. Choose an '*attitude of gratitude*' today - especially if you encounter a problem. THEN you can enjoy happiness!

5. Lesson Wrap Up:

- a. The more time you spend praying about everything that happens in your day, the less time you will spend thinking about negative things. You may not even notice them! Pray often!

Planning:

What is this week's main point in your own words? _____

How can I help my students practice thankfulness today? _____

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Week 8: April 27 - May 2

Lesson 8: I Trust in God's Goodness

1. Review Story (Chapter 4)

- a. Curtis was also evacuated and is living at the school. During lunch after church, he invites Wayne to help care for the evacuees' horses at a nearby ranch. He and Curtis become fast friends. Curtis is released to return home. He and Wayne pass through burnt forest but turn a corner into a green haven untouched by fire - and *almost* crash into a boulder blockade! They now walk. Wayne senses something strange, but doesn't know why. The scenery is beautiful, but he misses it all as he sinks back into anger at God. He lives in a dark world.

2. God is holy which means He is not able to do anything wrong.

- a. He cannot lie, be mean, or do anything evil because He has NO sin in Him.
 - i. People do bad because they DO have sin IN them.
 - ii. Since God has NO sin in Him, He is 100% good. Everything He does is 100% good.

3. God can use the bad things that happen to us to help us become good.

- a. Only God can clean sin out of us. God is so powerful, He uses our troubles to do that!
 - i. We can choose to complain during hard times and never learn anything OR we can learn to thank God for what we will learn because of this hardship.
 - ii. God sees what we will look like after He uses our troubles to wash away our sin.

4. Thanking God during hard times tells Him we trust Him.

- a. When we are in the middle of something that appears bad and choose to thank God, it tells Him we believe He is good and He is helping us become better people.
- b. *"I know what I am planning for you," says the Lord. "I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future."* Jeremiah 29:11

5. Remember the past; be thankful in the present; trust God for the future.

- a. Think often about the good things God has done for you in the past.
- b. Remember He is holy and cannot sin so He will do good things for you in the future.
- c. Yesterday used to be today and tomorrow will become today. Today is the only day I can live inside of. If I practice thankfulness today, then all my yesterdays and all my tomorrows will overflow with thankfulness and my life will be a happy one.

6. Application

- a. **Today** is the day to be watchful and thankful for God's goodness!
- b. Thank God for one thing that happened yesterday. And today? And tomorrow? (*Emphasize thanking God for His goodness and His future plans*)
 - i. Ex: "God, thank you for being good, even when bad things happen."

7. Lesson Wrap Up

- a. The reason I can be thankful in both easy and hard times is because I know God is holy and everything He does will always be good.

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Week 9: May 4-9

Lesson 9: Finding Thankfulness May Take A Lot of Effort!

1. Review Story (Chapter 4)

- a. Curtis was also evacuated and is living at the school. During lunch after church, he invites Wayne to help care for the evacuees' horses at a nearby ranch. He and Curtis become fast friends. Curtis is released to return home. He and Wayne pass through burnt forest but turn a corner into a green haven untouched by fire - and *almost* crash into a boulder blockade! They now walk. Wayne senses something strange, but doesn't know why. The scenery is beautiful, but he misses all of it as he sinks back into anger at God. He lives in a dark world.

2. Listen to Chapter 5 of Story - "More Lost Horses"

3. Story Questions

- a. What question did Wayne ask Curtis after he told him his story?
 - i. *"If God is so good, why did He let that fire happen and take my horses away after He gave them to me?"*
- b. When Curtis hurried to the pasture after he heard frightened whinnies, what did he see and do?
 - i. *Wolves surrounded them; he screamed and opened the gate to let them out; got his dad and went after them.*
- c. How did they finally scare the wolves away?
 - i. *Curtis threw rocks in front of the leading wolf then they all scattered.*
- d. What did Curtis see on the back of Pappy? (*A big cut*)
- e. Why does Wayne stare at Curtis?
 - i. *They both wonder if Scar and Beauty were originally Curtis's horses!*
- f. After his dad's accident, what does Curtis mean when he says, "We both knew what that meant?" (*Let kids answer!*)

4. Application:

- a. Curtis is probably 17 or 18 when all this happened to him. Everyone would agree that this was a terrible incident. Imagine yourself as Curtis and all this has occurred in just one day. How would you feel? (*wait for answers*) Can you find *anything* to be thankful for?
 - i. **(Let kids respond first.)** *Curtis saved his horses before the wolves attacked them in the pasture; they just happened to have a load of riverstone in the pickup; they were able to drive the wolves off the road to let the horses escape; Dad was still alive and would recover pretty well.*

5. Lesson Wrap Up:

- a. You *always* have a choice as to how you respond to problems in your life. God says, "IN *everything* give thanks" because it will open our eyes to see the good gifts God has hidden in a bad situation. It will protect us from living a dark, lonely life. But - it may take effort to find them!

Planning:

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How can I help my students practice thankfulness today? _____

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Week 10: May 11-16

Lesson 10: I Say "Thank You" - and Mean It!

1. Review Story (Chapter 5)

- a. On the way to Curtis's house, Wayne told the story of how he acquired Scar and Beauty seven years ago. Curtis listened carefully but was reminded of his own story about his horses, Pappy and Sam. His story *also* involved wolves. He explained how he and his dad fought off a pack who were chasing his horses, and how one of them had received a deep cut, though Curtis had not seen the actual attack. While waiting for the horses to return home, Curtis's dad had a bad accident which meant he could not work for six months. This was bad news.

2. Saying "thank you" inspires people to be their best.

- a. When we thank others for their help or for a job well done, and really mean it, they feel appreciated and it motivates them to continue to do their best.

3. Be specific with your "thank yous."

- a. Wayne didn't stop at just saying, "thank you" to Curtis. If he did, Curtis may never have known exactly what Wayne was thankful for! Wayne specifically said, "Thanks for being such a good friend!" And you could tell he really meant it!
- b. Be specific in your thanks to God, like Daniel was in the Bible:
"I thank you and praise you...because you have given me wisdom and power. You told me what we asked of you; you told us about the king's dream." - Daniel 2:23

4. Always be thankful for your daily needs being met.

- a. Most people in the world do not have enough food, clothing, a safe place to live, a good education and many other things. Tell God and your parents often how much you appreciate those things! Jesus always thanked God for food: *"Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, [Jesus] gave thanks and broke the loaves."* Mark 6:41

5. Application

- a. Name one person right now that you will thank and what you will thank them for.
 - i. Parents: bringing you to your class; providing food, vacations, gifts, loving you!
 - ii. Friend: for something they shared; for helping with homework or a problem...
 - iii. GOD! His love for you; giving you a good family; forgiving you when you sin; always being with you; making you brave; giving us the Bible, your healthy body that can do gymnastics...

6. Lesson Wrap Up

- a. If no one ever thanked you for a gift you gave them or for working hard helping them with something, would it be easy to keep doing those things? (*NO!*) Those two little words - Thank You! - have great power! They make the world a happier and safer place to live. Say them often - and mean it!

Planning:

What is this week's main point in your own words? _____

How can I help my students practice thankfulness today? _____

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"I pause to remember & enjoy the gifts God has given me today."

God's Truth: Colossians 4:2 (NIRV):

"Give a lot of time and effort to prayer. Always be watchful and thankful."

Week 11: May 18-23 No Classes **May 25 (Memorial Day), May 30 (Starwatch); June 1 (Staff training)**

Lesson 11: Thankfulness Is a Powerful Weapon Against Sin

1. Review Story (Chapter 5)

- a. On the way to Curtis's house, Wayne told the story of how he acquired Scar and Beauty seven years ago. Curtis listened carefully but was reminded of his own story about his horses, Pappy and Sam. His story *also* involved wolves. He explained how he and his dad fought off a pack who were chasing his horses, and how one of them had received a deep cut, though Curtis had not seen the actual attack. While waiting for the horses to return home, Curtis's dad had a bad accident which meant he could not work for six months. This was bad news.

2. Listen to Chapter 6 of Story - "Beauty for Ashes"

3. Story Questions

- a. In the last chapter, Curtis ended with, "We both knew what that meant." What was going to change because of the accident?
 - i. *The horses would be put up for adoption. They couldn't take care of them anymore.*
- b. What were the responses of Curtis and his dad after they had to give the horses up?
 - i. *Curtis chose to be angry at God.*
 - ii. *His dad chose to remain thankful for many things.*
- c. What important things did Pastor Shane do to help Curtis to let go of his anger?
 - i. *He prayed - a lot!*
 - ii. *He explained that anger is like darkness so we can't see any good around us. It separates us from God and others.*
 - iii. *Thankfulness opens our eyes so we can see many good things.*
- d. What did Wayne realize had happened by holding onto ungratefulness and anger?
 - i. *It did nothing to help bring his horses back and only wore him out.*
- e. What was the big lesson Wayne learned as they walked home after finding the horses?
 - i. *That by refusing to thank God for anything good, he had missed everything good, which plunged him into his dark world.*
- f. What will the scar on his horse remind him to do?
 - i. *To be thankful every day - even in the midst of troubles.*

4. Application:

- a. Think of a time when you were really mad. Were you having a good time, laughing and singing?
- b. What is the quickest way to stop being mad? (*Go on a thankful hunt! You cannot be mad and thankful at the same time!*)

5. Lesson Wrap Up:

- a. Thankfulness is stronger than anger, complaining, greed, selfishness, worry, fear and more! Thankfulness is a gift from God we can use everyday to keep us close to Him.

Planning:

Have your students grown in thankfulness? What could you share with their parents? _____

Spring 2020 CT: 'I Choose Thanks' Senior Version

How do you choose thanks?

"I pause to remember & enjoy the gifts God has given me today."

God's Truth: Colossians 4:2 (NIRV):

"Give a lot of time and effort to prayer. Always be watchful and thankful."

Week 12: May 26-29 No Classes May 30 (Starwatch) & June 1 (Staff Training)

Lesson 12: Prayer and Thankfulness Lead to Victories

1. Review Story (Chapter 6)

- a. Curtis tells Wayne he had to put his horses up for adoption after the local shelter found them. He then blamed God for his dad's accident and the loss of his horses. After working for Pastor Shane, he came to understand that it was his anger that caused his misery, not God. Wayne realized he too was miserable because of anger. He also realized what a great friend Curtis had become and thanked him. They raced to the meadow where they recovered the mules, Scar, and Beauty. The scar on Wayne's horse is now a powerful reminder to watch daily for God's gifts and to be thankful.

2. When we follow God's path, we win.

- a. God says in Psalm 50:23: *'If you keep to My path, I will reveal to you the salvation of God.'*
 - i. Following God's path means we obey Him.
 - ii. When we obey God, He shows us how to be victorious, how to be winners.

3. Following God includes giving Him thanks, especially when we don't feel like it.

- a. Psalm 50 also says, *"...giving thanks is a sacrifice that truly honors Me."*
- b. When we don't *feel* like being thankful, but choose to give thanks anyway - that is a sacrifice that makes God very happy. SO happy, that He shows us the way to victory!

4. When we thank God in the midst of something bad, He gives us something good.

- a. Would you trade your favorite toy or possession for a pile of ashes? (*No way!*)
 - i. In Isaiah 61:3, God's people have lost everything. It was like only having a pile of ashes left. But God says he will give them *"a beautiful crown in exchange for ashes ...victory, joy, and praise instead of depression and sadness."*

5. A victory is a win over an enemy in a battle.

- i. What was Wayne's enemy? (*anger*)
- ii. How did he gain a victory? (*He learned the power of thankfulness to see good beyond the bad.*)

6. Application:

a. Keep Asking God for help

- i. Who can thank God for something now? "God, thank you for _____"
- ii. Who can ask God for help to be thankful?
 1. "God, please help us to remember to thank you, and to see the gifts you are giving us today."

7. Lesson Wrap Up

- a. We all have bad things happen to us along with many good things. Be watchful for the many good gifts God sends: family, friends, nice days, learning new skills, food...and say thank you often to God and others. But remember to choose thankfulness when bad things happen too, because God has some amazing gifts hidden just for you that will make you stronger and better!

Planning:

Have your students grown in thankfulness? What could you share with their parents? _____