



**Does gratitude strengthen your faith?
If so, how?**

Adult to Small Child

Read: [Luke 17:15](#).

Reflect: In Luke 17, Jesus heals ten lepers. All ten are healed but only one returns to say thank you. I've often wondered why. I don't think it's that the other nine are ungrateful, but rather that they move on to other things. After being sick for so long, they're eager to live new and healthy lives. It's easy for us to forget to show gratitude in our daily lives as well, always rushing into something new. Gratitude is like a muscle: the more we exercise it, the stronger we become. Give gratitude a try this week.

Respond: Gratitude Box: On slips of paper, record all the things you're thankful for this week. Place them in a box. Try to be as specific as you can, and see how many things you can name. If your child is old enough to share or draw, he or she can add to the box as well. At the end of the week, review the items in the box. Which things did you remember, and which had you forgotten by the end of the week?

Adult to Elementary Child

Read: [Luke 18:15-17](#).

Reflect: The disciples were shooing away the children, telling their parents that Jesus was a busy and important guy who didn't have time for them, but Jesus would have none of it: "Allow the children to come to me. Don't forbid them, because God's kingdom belongs to people like these children. I assure you that whoever doesn't welcome God's kingdom like a child will never enter it." You are important to God, you make a difference, and adults can learn from you. What do kids have that adults may have lost and most need? Here's what I thought of first: imagination, heart, openness, curiosity...

Respond: Make a list of what you are good at, and while you're at it, think about what your friends and your siblings do really well. How do these things help us come close to the kingdom of God?

Adult to Youth or Young Adult

Read: [Luke 17:11-19](#).

Reflect: In Luke 17:11-19, we see a group of men needing healing. In true Jesus-like fashion, Jesus heals them, and they go on their way. But a moment later, one returns to offer thanks and praise to Jesus. Jesus praises him for his faith. It isn't often we equate thankfulness with faith, but here Jesus shows that the way we respond to the gifts we are given is, in fact, related to our faith. What have you been given lately? How did you show thanks and appreciation?

Respond: Choose some blank note cards together. Then, take time to write thank-you notes to people who have given you a gift recently, whether it was simply to ask how you were or a physical item. Send the notes by mail for an more special touch in an email-and-text world.

Adult to Adult

Read: [Luke 15](#).

Reflect: In Luke 15, when the man found his lost sheep and when the woman found her lost coin, each story adds new meaning and value to the phrase "what was once lost is now found." Jesus uses this parable to convey to us how he rejoices when we repent. Like a found poem in the below exercise, our lives are a reflection of the found, and God rejoices in that. When you lose yourself in the cacophony of social media or begin to doubt God's great love for you, think about how it made you feel to find this lost poem. God is always searching for you like a new poem waiting to be found on the page.

Respond: Stretch your world this week. To what area of your life can you give new meaning? Today, we'll create a lost poem on a page filled with words. We will give the page new meaning by eliminating most of the words except for a select and deliberate few.

Here's how:

1. Select 15-20 words from the page.
2. Identify a theme.
3. Decide on your message.
4. Using your black marker, cross out or blackout all the other words except for the 15-20 you selected.
5. Read aloud the words left on the page.

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