

Celebrating Father's Day

Who Do We Appreciate?

*Permission to reprint this lesson granted for local church use.
Copyright © Group Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 481, Loveland, CO 80539*

Children love to have parties and receive gifts.
But they also love to give things to others, because it makes them feel good.

Create a festive atmosphere for this lesson.
Help children see there are simple and fun ways to show appreciation. Emphasize that appreciation is one gift that'll make the giver, the receiver feel good.

A Powerful Purpose

Children will understand why it's good to show appreciation to others,
and today especially our dads.

A Sprinkling of Supplies

- Fill a sack with party decorations such as streamers, balloons, party hats, noisemakers, banners and festive tablecloths.
- You'll also need a bag filled with wrapped, inexpensive gifts such as pencils, stickers and magnets.
- You'll need a chalkboard and chalk, a bag of Hershey's Kisses, construction paper, crayons, glue, scissors, a Bible and one decorated cupcake for each person.

The Lively Lesson

Decoration Sensation

Materials: You'll need a paper sack filled with decorations such as streamers, balloons, party hats, noisemakers, banners and festive tablecloths.

Show children the plain paper bag when they come in the room. Say: We're going to talk about appreciation today. To appreciate means to be grateful or glad or thankful. In a moment, you're going to appreciate me for what I'm going to let out of this bag.

Empty the sack's contents on the floor and show the kids all the party decorations. Say: Instant party!

Give everyone one decoration. Have kids each contribute to decorating the entire room.

Afterward say: I really appreciate each one of you. You did a great job decorating this room. Our party today is to celebrate each one of you as a person and to celebrate our fathers.

Ask:

- How does it feel to know you could contribute to the decorating?
- When do people tell you they appreciate what you do?
- In what ways do you appreciate your father?

Gift Giving and Singing

Materials: You'll need a bag filled with small wrapped, inexpensive gifts such as pencils, stickers or magnets. Make sure you have one for each person.

After decorating, have kids form a circle in the center of the room. Sing upbeat and happy songs such as "If You're Happy and You Know It." Or, sing some affirmation songs such as "Jesus Loves Me." Have kids each sing their name in place of the word "me."

Bring out the bag of small wrapped gifts. Let children reach in and take one. As they take one say: I appreciate you, (name).

After all kids have a gift, let them open them. Then ask:

- How does receiving a gift make you feel?
- What are other times you've felt appreciated by parents or friends?
- When you appreciate people, what kinds of gifts do you give?

What Makes Parties Fun?

Go around the room and let each person describe his or her gift. After everyone shares, ask:

- Why are parties so much fun?
- What's the best part of a party?
- How many of you like gifts the best?

Say: There are lots of reasons to have parties. Parties let people know we like them. And they celebrate something special that's happened to someone we like.

Love Comes From Within Us

Share 1 John 4:7-8 with the children. Ask them what this Bible verse means to them.

A Gift for You

Materials: You'll need a bag of Hershey's Kisses.

Ask: Why do we give gifts? Answers could be to show we like someone, to make someone feel good or to celebrate something.

Have children pair up. Give each person a Hershey's Kiss. Say: Give your Hershey's Kiss to your partner and say what you appreciate about him or her. For example, you may appreciate that person's smiles or friendliness.

Let kids exchange Hershey's Kisses and affirmations. Participate yourself, making sure everyone's included.

Center of Affirmation

Materials: You'll need a party hat. Set up chairs in a circle. Put one chair in the center. Place a party hat on the chair, & Clappers

Tell children that another good gift is appreciation. Appreciation is letting people know what you like about them. It's a part of loving each other. You can show appreciation many ways such as sending special notes, saying thank you or giving hugs.

Tell kids to sit in the circle of chairs. Sit in the middle and put on the party hat. Say that they'll play an appreciation game. One at a time a person sits in the center chair and puts on the party hat. Kids in the circle each say one thing they appreciate about the center person and then everyone "Claps."

Let everyone have a chance to be in the "Center of Affirmation" (yourself included). Affirm visitors for ways they've already contributed to the class.

We Appreciate Snacks

Materials: You'll need decorated cupcakes.

Hold hands and pray: Thank you, God, for giving us people to appreciate. Please help us remember to love people by showing appreciation to someone every day. Help us remember to appreciate you for all the things you have done for us. In Jesus' name. Amen

Give a colorful cupcake to one person and say: Love each other. Give a cupcake to another person and say: Love comes from God. Do this until everyone has a cupcake. Enjoy and appreciate the snacks!

Showing Appreciation for Dad

Materials: Blank card stock, construction paper, sticker, glitter glue, ribbon, etc...

Tell kids they're each going to make a card for our fathers or one special person of their choice. Brainstorm words or pictures of appreciation they could write.

For example, "Thanks for making me happy!" or "I love you!" Write words on the chalkboard so they can copy them.

Show kids the supplies and give each person a piece of construction paper. Tell them to take down and use any of the party decorations and supplies to design a card for their special person. For example, they could cut some shapes from a colorful streamer and glue the shapes on the front of a folded piece of construction paper. They could tape a balloon inside the card and write, "Thanks for being my friend."

After the cards are finished, have kids show them and tell about the special people who'll receive them. Close with prayer, thanking God for all the special people he has given us. Encourage children to show appreciation through the coming week.